



AAMT

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Dear Colleague

You will be aware from the media and in your school that NAPLAN (National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy) results are now being distributed to parents. The release of the summary report has resulted in a range of comments in the media. Interpreting the data for parents and at the class and school levels is likely to be on the agenda for many members of AAMT. I write to remind you of the AAMT's position on the matter – these comments refer to the *Position paper on the practice of assessing mathematics learning* and may be useful to you in the conversations about the NAPLAN results that are likely to be occurring all over the country. The *Position paper* can be downloaded from <http://www.aamt.edu.au/Documentation/Statements> ; it is the fourth one down the list.

One of the main issues is the use of NAPLAN data. The *Position paper* makes some clear statements about this. It states that Education authorities' assessment should:

- “make claims that can be related directly to what is assessed”: the format of NAPLAN tests limits what they are able to assess.
- "prohibit the publication of league tables of schools from their data": league tables and similar coarse comparisons of schools' performances are not helpful to teachers and the teaching and learning of mathematics.
- "provide information that maximises opportunities for teachers to capitalise, in their teaching, on the assessment information gathered": it is more than just providing the data – education authorities need to support teachers and schools to analyse NAPLAN results to diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses. (p. 7)

There is no doubt that the NAPLAN results can provide diagnostic information about your students so I encourage you to seek out that information and use it to inform your teaching. However, the *Position paper* argues for 'appropriate assessment' by stating that teachers should:

- “assess the full range of learning goals by using a range of strategies”: NAPLAN tests are only one component of a comprehensive approach to assessment in mathematics. (p. 3)

Education authorities and schools need to further support the development of quality assessment in mathematics.

The release of the NAPLAN results is a single event in this whole year of teaching mathematics. I hope that you are able to be involved in productive thinking and conversations about the process and the data as part of what we all recognise as the 'main game' – high quality teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics for all our young people.

Yours faithfully

Judy Anderson
President AAMT

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